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#49

April 1992

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NEWS & VIEWS

Where Are They Now? Department

Harold Copperman, former president of Commodore, has resurfaced as president and CEO of JWP Businessland. Until the January 21 announcement, he had been serving as president of the company and is assuming the CEO mantle after the expiration of the current CEO's contract. Copperman joined JWP Businessland in July, 1991. JWP acquired the Businessland chain in November 1991, adding its yearly \$1.8 billion revenues to its own \$3.2 billion worldwide revenues.

Better Battery Charging

It is a fact: Laptop computers eat batteries. And when fully discharged NiCad batteries are often unchargeable, dead for good. But now a German company called Enstore Energy has come up with an integrated circuit that can fully recharge a NiCad battery pack in less than ten minutes, even if it's been fully discharged. Laptops that incorporate the new chip would almost never need to have the battery replaced. Enstore's technology digitally controls a complex arrangement of high-current pulses, which is matched to the response of the battery. Though fast-charging techniques aren't new, this chip is the first to match the charging current to the cell's response. This increases efficiency and eliminates heating. The process can even, over the span of a few recharges, rejuvenate a totally dead battery. Now, if we only had an Amiga laptop to try this on...

New Amiga Touchscreen

Long-time Apple II peripheral manufacturer Edmark has announced it will be adapting its TouchWindow touchscreen for Amiga use. Currently available for the Apple II, PC, and Mac, the TouchWindow lets you point to the computer screen with your finger to activate pull-

down menus, make selections, move objects, and draw. The \$335 screen can be attached to a monitor with adhesive strips, and you can remove the screen to use it as a stand-alone graphics tablet. Edmark, PO Box 3218, Redmond, WA 98073, 800-426-0856.

Adobe Releases SDK v1.1

Adobe Systems is releasing a new version of its *PostScript Language Software Development Kit* in two different versions for the Macintosh and MS/DOS machines. The SDK is a set of tools and references that lets software developers take advantage of Adobe PostScript. SDK v1.0 was provided in one kit containing both Mac and MS/DOS format disks, but version 1.1 is available as two separate kits with sample code in either Mac or PC format. Information contained in the kits is also applicable to the Amiga and UNIX systems, though Amiga and UNIX developers will have to translate the data to suitable formats. The kits include technical papers, manuals, sample code, fonts, and utilities, and include *Adobe Type Manager* software that lets Mac or PC developers test applications. The price is \$500. Adobe Developer's Association, 800-833-6687.

Pen Computers Still a Flop

There were noticeably fewer people attending this year's Pen Computing Conference in San Jose, CA, than attended last year's kickoff show. This has left industry pundits wondering whether the novelty has already worn off. Pen computers are still a 'solution looking for a problem' in the eyes of most computer users. Then, too, there is still a dearth of real pen computers on the market. *Pen-Point* and *Microsoft Windows for Pen Computing* are still not shipping, and most pen-based systems are still in development or waiting for FCC certification. Only a couple of relatively low-powered models are actually shipping. And even when and

Rights, Right On

The networking section of the February 3 issue of *InfoWorld*, the bastion of the IBM, reports that the North American Directory Forum, which is an organization of 17 electronic mail services, has issued a what might be called an Electronic Bill of Rights for E-Mail users. The seven points are:

1. The right not to be listed.
2. The right to be informed when your entry is created.
3. The right to examine your entry.
4. The right to correct inaccurate information in your entry.
5. The right to remove specific information in your entry.
6. The right to be assured that your listing will comply with U.S. or Canadian law.
7. The right to expect timely fulfillment of these rights.

We're positively elated that the group has done this. With privacy being increasingly eroded, we applaud these steps and hope other services will take heed.

if pen computers become available en masse, users will still have to wait for developers to create applications that will run on them.

I'll Trade You a Buzz Aldrin...

The latest type of trading card to make its appearance in the Big Trading Card Boom is... The Space Card? Yep. Space Shots Trading Cards feature astronauts, NASA space photos, moon pictures, pix of the space shuttle, and more. Just the thing for that budding astronaut. There are two sets available, each containing 110 trading cards. The out-of-print Series I set sells for \$22.50, while the more current Series II goes for \$18. (Add \$2 per set S&H.) They are available from: R&R Sports Cards, 2661 Midway Rd. #210, Carrollton TX 75006, 214-248-4010.

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NAB Dates

The National Association of Broadcasters convention is scheduled for April 12-16 in Las Vegas. Among other things, there will be 65 papers presented at the HDTV World conference. Looks like HDTV might be getting a little closer.

What's in a Name?

We hear that Commodore's next medium-end machine is code-named 'Walnut.' Bill Sydnes, Vice President of Engineering at Commodore, was involved with the PCjr project at IBM and, of course, the PCjr was code-named 'Peanut.' So we'll just take a wild guess that Mr. Sydnes had a hand in code-naming the new Commodore machine...

Govt. Data Online

The Government Printing Office Wide Information Network Data Online Act of 1991 (GPO WINDO, H.R. 2772) is a proposal to provide low-cost one-stop shopping for online access to hundreds of government databases, coordinated through the Government Printing Office. This service would be free to 1400 federal depository libraries, and available

Your Own Personal Atomic Clock

The battery-backed clock in your Amiga is good, but no better than a quartz wristwatch. And, let's face it: the factory setting for accuracy is nothing to run a critical application by. Once every couple of months (or every day, if your clock battery's dead) you probably want to reset it. But where can you find a *really* accurate time standard? How about the Official National Bureau of Standards Atomic Clock at the Naval Observatory in Washington, DC? You can't get much more accurate than *that*! Any U.S. citizen can dial up the clock and get the correct cesium-isotope-nuclear-decay-generated time any time he or she wants it. If you just want to listen to the recorded time and enter it into your computer manually, you can, for 50¢ a minute, dial the Atomic Clock at 1-900-410-TIME. But if you have a modem, you can let the Amiga dial up for you and automatically set its own clock. All you need is the PD program *AtomClock* by Art Steinmetz. Unfortunately, I can't find *AtomClock* anywhere on the Fish Disks, and must conclude that I picked it up online somewhere. You might try Portal, CompuServe, GENie, BIX, or your local Amiga BBS. It's a great little utility program, and well worth hunting for.

at the incremental cost of dissemination to everyone else. It would complement rather than supplant other agencies' efforts to disseminate information. Its purpose is to make it more convenient for the public to obtain low-cost access to government information. At present there are about ten sponsors for the bill, including Rep. Rose (D-NC), who is the chair of the House committee the bill must pass. Organizational endorsements and personal letters to

Congress are needed for this important legislation to pass. So write your Congressperson! The proposal is currently supported by over two dozen professional and consumer associations. For more information about the GPO WINDO, contact: American Library Association, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5675, 202-547-4440, or: Taxpayer Assets Project, PO Box 19367, Washington, DC 20036, 202-387-8030

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